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United Nations Volunteers

United Nations Volunteers

Report of the Administrator

Summary

This report, for 2016-2017, presents the results achieved by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme during the second biennium of its four-year Strategic Framework, 2014-2017. Noting the accomplishments of the programme, the report also reflects on the challenges faced, the results of an independent evaluation of the Strategic Framework, and a full management audit of UNV. Taking strategic guidance from the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, and based on lessons learned, UNV undertook an organizational transformation and strategic repositioning during 2017-2018, paving the way for the new Strategic Framework, 2018-2021 (DP/2018/6), which was presented to the Executive Board in January 2018.

The following annexes, posted on the Executive Board website, complement this report: (1) United Nations Volunteer statistics, 2016-2017; (2) UNV financial overview, 2016-2017; (3) Report on the UNV integrated results and resources matrix, 2016-2017; and (4) Results matrix for the UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021 (an update to DP/2018/6).

Elements of a decision

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the results-oriented biennial report of the Administrator; (b) express appreciation to all United Nations Volunteers for their outstanding contributions to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the 2016-2017 biennium; (c) commend UNV for the results achieved under its Strategic Framework, 2014-2017, including during the 2016-2017 biennium; (d) welcome the new Strategic Framework, 2018-2021 (DP/2018/6), based on the strategic guidance of the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and the findings and recommendations of the independent evaluation of the previous Strategic Framework, taking note of the finalized results matrix; (e) welcome the organizational transformation of UNV in 2017-2018, and the decentralization of capacities and delegation of authority from headquarters to the regional and country levels, enabling UNV to be better 'fit for purpose' for its new Strategic Framework; (f) recalling decision 2017/31, paragraph 8, note the importance of regular resources provided by UNDP to deliver on its Strategic Framework; (g) reaffirm the crucial role of the Special Voluntary Fund to the delivery of the UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021, calling upon all development partners in a position to do so to contribute to the Fund; and (h) request UNV to report annually to the Executive Board on the delivery of the UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021.

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Annexes (available on the Executive Board website)

1. UN Volunteers statistics, 2016-2017
2. UNV financial overview, 2016-2017
3. Report on UNV integrated results and resources matrix, 2016, 2017
4. Results matrix of the UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021 (update to DP/2018/6)

I. Introduction

1. This report covers the second biennium of the UNV four-year Strategic Framework, 2014-2017. Chapter II presents the results achieved during the biennium based on inputs from both external and internal sources, including evaluations and audit reports, internal reports, and financial data. In most instances, primary data were used to measure progress against the integrated results and resources matrix. Chapter III presents the strategic and organizational transformation that UNV has undergone in 2017-2018, and chapter IV concludes with the way forward.

II. Highlights of results, 2016-2017

2. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2014/13, this chapter is aligned with the UNV integrated results and resources matrix, 2014-2017. Annex 3 provides further data on baselines, targets and performance.

3. Overall, the outcome and output indicator performance for 2016-2017 was:

(a) Seven targets were met or surpassed, ● green (performance was at or within 5 per cent above the target);

(b) Eleven targets were not met, ○ yellow (performance was more than 5 per cent below the target).

A. Outcome 1. United Nations entities are more effective in delivering their results by integrating high-quality and well-supported UN Volunteers and volunteerism in their programmes.

	Output performance	Indicator performance against final targets	
1.1	United Nations partners reporting an effective contribution by UN Volunteers and volunteerism	92%	○
1.2	Beneficiaries positively impacted by UNV	61%	○

4. Deployment of UN Volunteers and effective integration of volunteerism into the United Nations system is based on strong relationships between UNV and its United Nations partners. During 2016-2017, 92 per cent of United Nations partner entities reported that UN Volunteers and volunteerism had made an effective contribution to their programme delivery, which, though short of the 100 per cent target, represents a considerable increase from 69 per cent in 2013. The number of beneficiaries affected positively by UNV reached an estimated 4.9 million (61 per cent of the Strategic Framework target of 8 million).

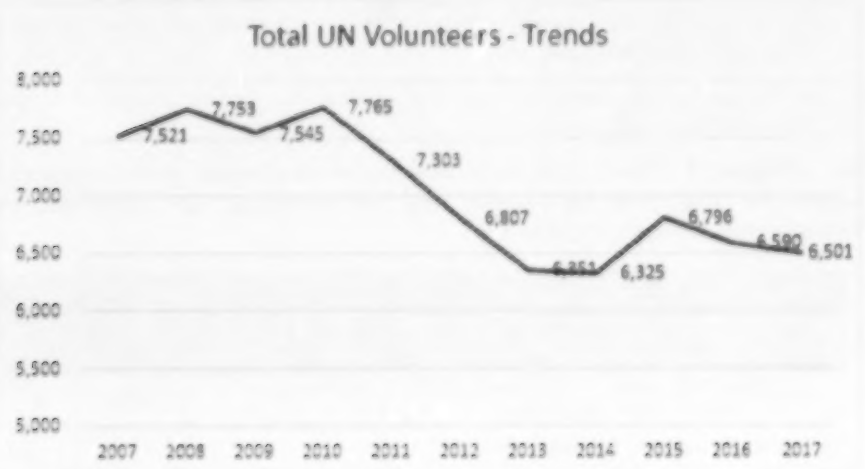
Output 1.1. Improved UN Volunteer mobilization by better forecasting of partner United Nations entity needs, and better delivery through responsive and innovative UN Volunteer solutions.

	Output performance	Indicator performance against final targets	
1.1.1	UN Volunteers mobilized	65%	○
1.1.2	UN Online Volunteers mobilized	81%	○

1.1.3	United Nations entities with innovative, needs-driven programmatic agreements for the mobilization of UN Volunteers	90%	○
1.1.4	UN Volunteer modalities and initiatives	110%	●

UN Volunteer mobilization

5. Mobilization of UN Volunteers in support of the United Nations system decreased from 6,796 in 2015 to 6,501 in 2017. This wide gap is attributed to a number of factors. As the independent evaluation of the Strategic Framework noted, "[s]ome targets defined in the [Strategic Framework] have been aspirational and not based on a realistic assessment of the external factors, partners' demands and UNV's capacities to deliver". Since cost recovery for volunteer mobilization underpins the financial model of UNV, the declining mobilization has not only reduced the collective development impact of UNV, but also put pressure on its financial sustainability.



6. As part of its drive to improve volunteer mobilization and increase impact within the United Nations system, UNV has sought to strengthen partnerships with various United Nations entities. Three new memorandums of understanding have been signed during the biennium, with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

7. Against the backdrop of an overall decline in volunteer mobilization, long-term trends towards increased demand for national UN Volunteers continued in 2016-2017. The proportion of national to international UN Volunteers grew from 28 per cent in 2014 to 41 per cent in 2017. This enables UNV partners to strengthen national ownership and capacities, and assists in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as national UN Volunteers are often better suited to engaging citizens through volunteerism, empowerment and participation at the community level.

8. The ratio of women UN Volunteers increased from 43 per cent in 2015 to 47 per cent in 2017. In non-family duty stations, the sex ratio decreased slightly, from 37 to 35 per cent women over the same period. UNV has explicitly sought out and recommended highly qualified women candidates to its United Nations partners for selection, particularly for peacekeeping missions.

9. In 2017, 72 per cent of international UN Volunteers were from the South. This number represents a major UNV contribution to South-South cooperation, bringing people from the South together to find solutions to development challenges through exchanges, as well as transfer of skills, knowledge and good practices.

10. The average age for a UN Volunteer in 2017 was 35. The proportion of UN Volunteers under age 30 increased from 23 per cent in 2015 to 28 per cent in 2017, including 8 per cent mobilized through the UN Youth Volunteer modality.

11. During the biennium, UNV focused its efforts to engage persons with disabilities as UN Volunteers, with an initial placement in Ukraine in 2017. In order to increase engagements and opportunities for persons with disabilities to volunteer in the United Nations system, UNV partnered with UNDP on a joint talent programme for young professionals with disabilities, launched in 2017 with support from the Government of Germany.

UN Online Volunteer mobilization

12. During the biennium UNV scaled up its Online Volunteering Service, which helps to ensure broader global participation in United Nations operational activities for development and in the 2030 Agenda, including the most excluded. As a result, the number of UN Online Volunteers increased from 11,000 in 2015 to almost 18,000 in 2017 providing volunteer services remotely to 38 United Nations entities and 2,200 non-governmental organizations. Sixty per cent of UN Online Volunteers were women, 65 per cent were young people, and almost 4 per cent were persons with disabilities.

13. While 18,000 UN Online Volunteers in 2017 represented 81 per cent of the target of 22,000, UNV strove to expand its online service and offer tailored solutions to Member States and other partners. To that end, in 2017 UNV started piloting a customized online volunteer management platform in partnership with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of India. In addition, UNV was able to position the Online Volunteers service as a channel for corporate social responsibility with private sector actors. Some of the pilot corporate online volunteering solutions included initiatives with Samsung Latinoamérica, Amadeus IT, the Medtronic Foundation, and Thomson Reuters.

Output 1.2. Volunteerism is integrated within the programming of United Nations entities through the implementation of joint UNV-United Nations partner programmes/ projects in four priority areas: youth; peacebuilding; basic social services; and community resilience for environment and disaster risk reduction.

	Output performance	[illegible] against end-target	
1.2.1	Total financial volume of the annual delivery of UNV resources in UNV-United Nations partner joint programmes/projects	117%	●
1.2.2	Other volunteers mobilized in joint UNV-United Nations partner programmes/projects across youth, peace, basic social services and community resilience for environment and disaster risk reduction	109%	●
1.2.3	Joint UNV-United Nations partner programmes/projects that integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women	60%	○

14. During 2014-2017, UNV set out to implement thematic global programmes to better leverage volunteers and volunteerism in the areas of access to basic social services; community resilience for environment and disaster risk reduction; peacebuilding; youth; and national capacity development through volunteer schemes (the latter reported under outcome 2). Highlights of the results from those global programmes are as follows:

(a) **The youth programme** focused on youth engagement and establishing youth volunteer schemes. In Lesotho, UNV worked with UNFPA and civil society to build

the employment skills of young people and ensure their access to information on health and gender issues. In Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Peru, UNV implemented the 'Youth for the SDGs' initiative (*Jóvenes por los ODS)*, with more than 27,000 young people acting as agents of change within their communities.

(b) **The basic social services programme** sought to expand access to basic social services through volunteerism. In Togo, UNV trained 500 national volunteer teachers and 50 girl guides and scouts on raising awareness about the root causes of violence, ways to prevent violence, and finding solutions. In India, UNV supported the Government in operationalizing the Accessible India Campaign, monitoring the submission of access audit reports for 1,600 public buildings across 25 cities.

(c) **The peacebuilding programme** supported United Nations efforts to sustain peace by increasing civic participation, working in particular with women and young people as agents of peace. For instance, UN Volunteers were deployed in Côte d'Ivoire, Guatemala, Guinea, Kyrgyzstan, Liberia, Mali, Nepal, and Somalia, as an important resource in implementing United Nations Security Council resolution 1325.

(d) **The community resilience for environment and disaster risk reduction programme** promoted volunteerism to facilitate environmentally sound practices. To that end UNV, jointly with the World Meteorological Organization, made a successful initial concept note application to the Green Climate Fund for a 5-year regional project in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and Senegal.

15. Despite some progress under the global programmes, the independent evaluation of the Strategic Framework, 2014-2017, highlighted that "[i]mplementation of programmes and projects under the Global Programmes started late and they [were only] partially implemented". Furthermore, the evaluation stated that "[i]nternally, there is a perceived dichotomy between [volunteer] mobilization and programming, while external partners perceive a gap between the communicated value of volunteerism and the provision of cheap labour. UNV faces challenges demonstrating evidence-based results beyond story telling" – and that UNV should focus on its comparative advantage in volunteers and volunteerism rather than entering into competition with partners on their substantive mandates.

16. In 2017 UNV commissioned an independent evaluation of **gender equality and women's empowerment** for organizational and programmatic effectiveness. The evaluation recognized some progress, and the high commitment of UNV staff and UN Volunteers to gender equality. Key recommendations of the evaluation included allocating financial and dedicated human resources for gender equality and gender mainstreaming; providing training and capacity development for UNV personnel at the headquarters, regional and country levels; and ensuring the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into the core work of UNV.

Output 1.3. The UN Volunteer assignment/experience is improved through effective support, including training and learning.

	Output performance	Indicator performance against final targets	
1.3.1	UN Volunteers reporting a positive volunteer experience	96%	
1.3.2	Departing UN Volunteers reporting that the assignment and learning opportunities provided are valuable for personal and professional development	98%	

17. In 2017, 91 per cent of all UN Volunteers reported a positive volunteer experience. The percentage of departing UN Volunteers who reported that their volunteer

assignment and learning opportunities were valuable for their personal and professional development remained high in 2017, at 93 per cent.

18. In 2016-2017, UNV continued the implementation of its UN Volunteer learning strategy, expanding access to learning for all UN Volunteers and including free-of-charge online training that encompassed language learning, courses on humanitarian assistance, business administration, and support to career management skills. In 2016, UNV launched the online volunteer learning platform 'eCampus' which, by the end of 2017, had 25,000 registered users. During the biennium, UNV mainstreamed and simplified its Capacity Development and Learning Facility, providing needs-based training through 40 national and regional learning events.

B. Outcome 2. Countries more effectively integrate volunteerism within national frameworks, enabling better engagement of people in development processes.

	Outcome performance	Indicator performance against final targets	
2.2	Number of countries with progress in implementing national volunteerism frameworks	103%[1]	

19. During 2016-2017, UNV engaged Member States to integrate volunteerism into their national frameworks and policies. While reporting on this outcome level indicator is undertaken on a triennial basis (linked to the Secretary-General's report on volunteering), much work was done at the global, regional and national levels to support the integration of volunteerism. In 2016-2017, for example, UNV supported the development of laws on volunteerism in Côte d'Ivoire and Madagascar; national policies on volunteerism in Kenya and Rwanda; and research on youth volunteerism in India and on youth employability and volunteerism in Cambodia. Development of policies, laws, legislation and research has also ensured the inclusion of volunteer groups in public policy and decision-making for the promotion of volunteerism.

20. UNV has continued to build on the progress made in pursuing forward-looking, innovative South-South focused partnerships. In June 2017, UNV and the Thailand International Cooperation Agency co-hosted a regional conference on 'South-South Exchange on Youth Volunteering for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Sharing Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and Other Approaches from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Countries'. With the Beijing Volunteer Service Federation, UNV co-hosted the second International Volunteer Service Exchange Conference in China, where 250 representatives from governments, volunteer-involving organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and United Nations organizations from 30 countries exchanged experiences and ideas to leverage volunteerism for sustainable development.

Output 2.1. Knowledge based on the value/contribution of volunteerism to peace and development results is expanded.

	Output performance	Indicator performance against final targets	
2.1.1	'State of the World's Volunteerism' reports published	67%	
2.1.2	UNV-supported studies on volunteerism in peace and development	67%	

[1] 2015 data (2017 will be collected during 2018 for the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/129.

21. The third State of the World's Volunteer Report – presenting new evidence on the role of volunteerism in community resilience – was drafted for delivery in 2018, and will be fully reported on in the next UNV report to the Executive Board.

22. In 2016 and 2017, UNV produced a number of studies on volunteerism in peace and development, including reports on the state of youth volunteering in India; volunteering and youth employability in Cambodia; and corporate volunteering in Brazil. Alongside those studies, two thematic papers for the 2018 report were completed in 2017, focusing on estimating the scale and scope of volunteerism worldwide and trends in volunteer infrastructure, 2009-2018.

Output 2.2. Increased capacities of countries (governments, civil society and volunteer-involving organizations) to foster volunteer engagement at the national and global levels.

	Output performance	Indicator performance against target
2.2.1	General Assembly resolutions that reference the value/contribution of volunteerism	50%
2.2.2	Volunteer-involving organizations partnering with UNV	89%

23. 'Integrating volunteering into peace and development: the plan of action for the next decade and beyond' (adopted under General Assembly resolution 70/129) steadily gained momentum in 2016 and 2017. The stakeholder and partnership plans were approved, and a secretariat, steering committee and working group established. In addition, five of the resolutions adopted at the 72nd session of the General Assembly referenced volunteers/ volunteerism, including in the areas of humanitarian assistance, youth issues, and disaster risk reduction.

24. In 2016 and 2017, UNV increased its stakeholder engagement at the national, regional, and global levels – especially with volunteer-involving organizations – to further promote and foster volunteer solutions and strongly position volunteerism in the 2030 Agenda. UNV successfully co-hosted the 2016 conference of International Volunteer Cooperation Organizations, in Bonn, Germany, with the German Agency for International Cooperation, and the International Forum for Volunteering in Development, which was attended by 138 delegates from 24 countries across sectors. UNV also played a critical facilitation role at the 2017 conference of International Volunteer Cooperation Organizations, in Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Output 2.3. Volunteering schemes established or strengthened at the national and regional level.

	Output performance	Indicator performance against target
2.3.1	National/regional volunteering schemes supported by UNV	41%
2.3.2	Volunteers mobilized through national/regional volunteering schemes, supported by UNV	181%[2]

25. UNV continued to support volunteer infrastructure in Member States by providing technical assistance in developing national volunteer schemes, networks of volunteers, and

[2] Volunteer infrastructure is the overarching framework under which other volunteers were mobilized in joint UNV-United Nations partner programmes/projects across youth, peace, basic social services and community resilience for environment and disaster reduction; this value therefore equals the total numbers of indicator 1.2.2.

coordinating bodies. During the entire strategic framework period, UNV partnered with Member States and regional bodies to initiate and strengthen national and regional volunteer schemes, including in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, India, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania and Sri Lanka , as well as the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Due to its comparative advantage in this field, UNV will continue leveraging its technical expertise and focusing its programmatic work on national capacity development through volunteer schemes (volunteer infrastructure) in the new Strategic Framework, 2018-2021.

26. In India, UNV partnered with UNDP and the Government to strengthen one of the largest youth volunteering schemes in the world, the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and National Service Scheme. UN Volunteers engaged youth volunteers through 3,273 new youth clubs, mobilizing more than 176,259 young people for volunteering activities. UNV conducted skills development training programmes that benefited 1,288 men and 8,195 women across the 29 project districts of India. In Côte d'Ivoire, together with UNDP, UNV supported the Government in drafting a law on volunteerism and conditions of service for national volunteers.

27. UNV further strengthened its long-standing partnership with the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps and with the ECOWAS Volunteer Programme in West Africa. Early results show a significant increase in the passing rate of students taught by ECOWAS volunteer teachers in Guinea (a 93 per cent passing rate, as compared to the 23 per cent national average). UNV supported research in Cambodia and is partnering with the Government in a joint programme on youth employability.

C. Institutional effectiveness: UNV is a more effective and efficient organization, with improved systems and business practices and processes, well-managed resources, and engaged personnel.

28. UNV implemented its institutional effectiveness results through 'result statements' detailed in the integrated results and resources matrix, 2014-2017 (within which indicator baselines and targets were established; see annex 3).

Accountability – results-based management, evaluation and audit

29. UNV made significant efforts to strengthen and institutionalize results-based management across all levels of the organization, which has increased its organizational efficiency. A comprehensive results-based management framework was developed in 2016-2017 in which modules were drafted, including results-oriented volunteer reporting. UNV programme and project management, joined-up planning, monitoring and reporting on organizational priorities and results.

30. The implementation rate of the UNV evaluation management responses improved from a baseline of 38 per cent to 47 per cent in 2017. Corporate evaluations undertaken during 2016-2017 included UNV gender equality and women's empowerment for organizational and programmatic effectiveness, as well as the comprehensive evaluation of the UNV Strategic Framework, 2014-2017 (both key inputs for this report).

31. UNV was audited by the UNDP Office of Audit and Investigations in 2017. The audit aimed to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of the governance, risk management and control processes pertaining to the following areas and sub-areas:

(a) Governance (leadership, institutional direction, oversight and assurance, external relationships and partnerships);

(b) Programme (quality assurance process, programme/project implementation, and knowledge management); and

(c) Operations (financial resource management, information and communication technology, general administrative management, procurement, human resources management, and staff and premises security).

32. The assessment found that the governance arrangements, risk management practices and controls were well established and functioning, but needed further improvement. Issues identified by the audit will not, however, significantly affect the achievement of the strategic objectives of UNV. All audit recommendations will be implemented in 2018.

Financial performance and sustainability[3]

33. The total financial value of UNV activities amounted to $202.8 million in 2016 and $195 million in 2017, totalling $397.8 million for the biennium. The main factor contributing to the decline in the total financial value of UNV activities was a reduction in UN Volunteer numbers (see chapter II, section A, above).

34. During the biennium the regular resources contributed to UNV by Member States through UNDP declined significantly. In 2016-2017 the amount received was $17.2 million, a 25 per cent decline compared to $22.8 million, in 2014-2015, and a 58 per cent decline from the peak of $40.6 million, in the 2008-2009 biennium. To provide predictability and transparency, UNDP introduced a clear budget line allocation for UNV in the UNDP integrated resources plan and integrated budget estimates, 2018-2021 (DP/2017/39), amounting to $10.6 million per year. This was confirmed by the Executive Board in its decision 2017/31, which "[w]elcome[d] the budget allocations to [... the] United Nations Volunteers programme and the ongoing contribution to [UNV] from the UNDP core budget, particularly in view of [the] importance [of UNV] for least developed countries, and call[ed] on UNDP to continue to provide contributions to [UNV], and to report to the Board if UNDP funding allocations to [UNV] change over the lifetime of this integrated budget".

35. The UNV Special Voluntary Fund contributions received in 2016-2017 amounted to $7.7 million, a 3 per cent drop compared to $7.9 million in the 2014-2015 biennium, despite the efforts undertaken. The Fund remains critical for the implementation of the Strategic Framework, and for continued innovation in integrating volunteers and volunteering with United Nations partners. In 2016-2017, the Fund was used for seed funding in programmatic engagements around the world in line with Strategic Framework priorities. In 2016-2017, UNV received contributions from the Governments of Bangladesh, China, the Czech Republic, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey.

36. UNV also received resources to fund UN Volunteer assignments from the Governments of Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland, as well as from the Agency for Volunteer Service (Hong Kong SAR, China), Save the Children, the International Association of Students in Economics and Management, and Cisco Systems. Contributions to the full funding programme amounted to $20.8 million during the biennium.

Operational support

37. In 2017, UNV launched new volunteer management application modules, reducing processing time, improving transparency and accountability, and increasing efficiency through decentralized functions. The average recruitment time from approval of the assignment request to UN Volunteer arrival was 65 working days for international UN Volunteers and 35 working days for national UN Volunteers. The average time for UNV to deploy an international UN Volunteer following selection by a partner decreased further to 43 days, a 14 per cent improvement compared to 2014.

38. In 2017, UNV launched updated conditions of service for national UN Volunteers, following extensive consultation with United Nations partners, UN Volunteers and United Nations country teams in 2016. The code of conduct was also reinforced, underlining the obligation for UN Volunteers to uphold and promote the highest standards of ethical and

[3] Also refer to annex 2.

professional conduct and to report any breach of United Nations Rules and Regulations, including any form of discrimination and any form of sexual exploitation or abuse, to the officials responsible for taking appropriate action.

39. Gender balance across UNV personnel remained a priority; 59 per cent of personnel are women, and women's representation at the senior management level (P-5 and above) increased significantly, to 55 per cent – up from 38 per cent in 2013. This progress bears testimony to concerted efforts within UNV to recruit and empower women.

III. The strategic and organizational transformation of UNV

40. At the beginning of 2017, three key factors led to the strategic and organizational repositioning of UNV:

(a) ***The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.*** The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review states that the United Nations and its entities must have a "mobile and flexible global workforce" that enables the Organization to be "physically aligned" with national needs;

(b) ***The UNV Strategic Framework results, and its precarious financial situation.*** Given the reduction and change in UN Volunteers deployed, as well as the decline in regular and other resources, the longer-term financial viability and sustainability of UNV was inadequate. Furthermore, its top three United Nations partners (Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Political Affairs/Department of Field Support, UNDP and UNHCR) were facing potential drastic funding cuts which could translate into even further reduced UN Volunteer numbers and thus lower financial flows; and

(c) ***Inadequate alignment of UNV internal structures and dilution of its organizational focus.*** The independent evaluation of the UNV Strategic Framework, 2014-17, noted structural impediments that complicated internal communications and service delivery. Growth was negatively affected by internal business processes and structures that led to a lack of clarity as to accountabilities.

41. Accordingly, UNV embarked on two important change processes related to what it does (the new UNV Strategic Framework, 2018-2021) and how it does it (the UNV organizational transformation process). The former was presented to the Executive Board in January 2018 (DP/2018/6) and the second discussed through four Board briefings (in February, May, July and September 2017) to seek advice from Member States and present the proposed realignment to ensure the organization remains fit for purpose to deliver on its mandate (Strategic Framework, 2018-21) to support Member States and the United Nations system in responding effectively to the 2030 Agenda and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

42. UNV embarked on a comprehensive change management plan with seven staff-led task forces leading to the development of functional and structural recommendations. UNV ensured broad stakeholder engagement, including with Member States, as noted above, through bilateral consultations and with the Executive Board. The new structure became effective at UNV headquarters and in its regional offices (Amman, Bangkok, Dakar, Nairobi and Panama City) on 1 January 2018. Adjustments in UNV country presence will be completed by 31 December 2018.

43. Based on projections as at March 2018, there was a total staff reduction of 52 at headquarters, from 166 to 114, translating to a cost reduction of $6.9 million, or 31 per cent. For country presence, the exercise is to be completed shortly. Further major results of the transformation include:

(a) ***Stronger partnership focus.*** The UNV financial and business model is built on its being responsive to partners' needs. UNV has therefore strengthened and

institutionalized its partnership and resource mobilization strategies. UNV increased its responsiveness to partner needs through more dedicated partner functions that are accountable for building partnerships within the United Nations system and, together with efforts by regional offices and country presences, for growing volunteer mobilization with United Nations partners;

(b) ***Empowering regional and country presences.*** UNV is closer to its partners by empowering its regional and country presences through devolution of decision-making authority, more functional capacities, and a professionalized workforce (national officers replacing international UN Volunteers at the country level);

(c) ***More efficient volunteer management.*** UNV adjusted its organizational design to achieve economies of scale through simplified volunteer management systems with defined accountability lines, consistent with United Nations reforms – making it a central global service centre for more efficient volunteer management; and

(d) ***The UNV volunteer solution offering.*** UNV is diversifying and modernizing its offer of volunteer solutions to respond to global trends and changes in demand by United Nations partners. UNV reviews its pricing approach to maintain its competitiveness, incentivizing further demand and recovering costs.

IV. UNV going forward

44. Taking into account the above results and the significant transformation of UNV, as well as the strategic guidance provided by Member States (articulated in the 2030 Agenda and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review), there are three strategic highlights on the UNV horizon.

45. First, UNV will continue to sharpen its focus on **supporting national capacity development through volunteerism**. In response to the independent evaluation, UNV is refining its substantive policy and advisory support to Member States, focusing on supporting national policies, legislation and volunteer schemes at the country level that can sustainably build national capacities, skills and institutions. Capacity development functions are being strengthened in every UN Volunteer description of assignment, whether it be for midwives deployed in South Sudan with UNFPA, or lawyers deployed to assist specialized judicial units in Niger with UNODC. All UN Volunteers should increase the capacities of their counterparts and beneficiaries.

46. Second, UNV will **deliver better volunteer solutions with United Nations partners for popularizing and implementing the sustainable development goals,** with an emphasis on South-South cooperation. The new Strategic Framework focuses efforts towards United Nations partners rather than programmatic areas. There are many positive initiatives with United Nations partners to deliver new volunteer solutions for the sustainable development goals, including a new youth advocates programme with UNICEF; inclusion of volunteers with disabilities with UNDP; refugee volunteers with UNHCR; collaboration with the UNDG Action Campaign to place volunteers in United Nations country teams to help Member States and national stakeholders communicate and popularize Agenda 2030, engaging citizens in its implementation; a new memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Secretariat; and a pipeline of new agreements with United Nations specialized agencies. The latter will help UNV diversify its United Nations system partnerships and will broaden the sustainable development goals that UNV supports in implementation.

47. Third, **UNV is adapting to be better fit for purpose**. Thanks to the commitment of UNDP and UNV leadership, the UNDP-UNV relationship has been greatly strengthened, as UNV is an integral part of the UNDP country-level platform for delivery of the sustainable development goals. Furthermore, UNV appreciates the

strong oversight, guidance and dialogue with the Executive Board in 2017, which were critical to ensuring the alignment of the UNV structure to deliver its new Strategic Framework – and to guaranteeing that UNV has the necessary, predictable regular ('core') resources. There are four related organizational priorities for consideration by the Board:

(a) ***Strong operational linkage between UNV and UNDP.*** UNV will continue to rely upon the administrative, financial and legal support of UNDP to deliver its new Strategic Framework – especially at the country level, where UNV leverages the broad UNDP presence.

(b) ***Predictable regular ('core') resources are critical to the transformation of UNV.*** As outlined in chapter II, UNV has received significantly reduced core resources over the past decade. The success of its transformation is dependent upon the small core resource allocation ($10.6 million) being fully resourced.

(c) ***The Special Voluntary Fund is important to the delivery of the Strategic Framework.*** Since UNV does not receive core resources directly, the Fund, created by General Assembly resolution 2659 (XXV) to support the activities of UNV, is critical for the success of the implementation of the Strategic Framework.

(d) ***More regular engagement with the Executive Board.*** The year 2017 saw enhanced engagement with the Executive Board, with four informal consultations on its strategic and organizational transformation. UNV has reported biennially to Board since 1988, but given the value of these regular interactions, the Board may wish to consider requesting UNV to report annually on the implementation of its Strategic Framework (as it did prior to 1988).

48. UNV is one of the original common services to the United Nations system, providing highly motivated and skilled individuals with an opportunity to volunteer within the United Nations system. Volunteers and volunteerism are uniquely placed to support the sustainable development goals through community-level implementation, as well as to facilitate people's engagement and capacity development. A transformed UNV can and will deliver much more under the new Strategic Framework, 2018-2021.